

ONLINE JOURNAL™

www.onlinejournal.com

Mohamed Atta kept terrorist 'E-list'

Together on 'America's Barbary Coast': Atta, Marwan, and 'the boys'

By Daniel Hopsicker

Online Journal Contributing Writer

VENICE, Florida, April 24, 2002 -- Mohamed Atta sent polemical emails, including one containing a gruesome photo of a dead Palestinian child, to a regular email list of some 40 individuals, all of whom became the focus of intense scrutiny from the FBI after the list's existence became known last September, the MadCowMorningNews has learned.

Alarming, the email addresses of several of the names on Atta's "terrorist e-list" appear to have been, or still are, employees of US defense contractors.

One name on Atta's email list, for example, apparently worked at a Canadian company called Virtual Prototypes, whose website touts the fact that the firm helped prototype the avionics instruments in the F-15 jet fighter, the F-22 Raptor, the B2 bomber and the Apache Longbow, among others.

Another address on the list, paradisehasaprice@hotmail.com, appears to refer to, or perhaps even to be, a female suicide bomber in Chechnya.

Emails from the terrorist ringleader first came into possession of authorities in Punta Gorda, Florida, 30 miles south of Venice. In the immediate aftermath of the attack they were turned over to law enforcement officials by a salesman at an avionics firm located at the nearby Charlotte County airport.

Welcome to America's Barbary Coast

Today Charlotte County Airport is also home, coincidentally or not, to major intrigue involving the disappearance from the county Sheriff's Department of at least 23 helicopters, spirited out of this country, for reasons unknown, to exotic and faraway destinations like Chile, in a General Services Administration Military Surplus program very much like the one that resulted in convictions in Arizona in the Forest Service C130 scandal of a few years ago after a C130 military cargo plane belonging to the US Forest Service was discovered on a runway at the Mexico City Airport with a billion dollars worth of cocaine aboard.

And it includes a cast of characters whose names, it must be stated, seem lifted straight from the transcripts of the Iran-Contra hearings, like Frank Moss and Dietrich Reinhardt, two notorious covert operatives linked over a decade ago to Barry Seal and the infamous Mena, Arkansas.

Moss owns the most conspicuous plane at the airport, a vintage DC3 painted to look like an airborne Ark, which has been sitting at the airport since its seizure two years ago.

And Dietrich Reinhardt, whose Caribe Air appears about to play an increasingly large role in our story, is a partner in a venture at the airport strongly suspected of having been the conduit of the helicopter's disappearance from the county Sheriff's airwing.

The local sheriff says as many as 23 helicopters were stolen.

Wags at the Charlotte County airport, however, insist that the missing helicopters were merely released on their own recognizance.

But first, Mohamed Atta's e-mail list . . .

The discovery of Atta's emails came about when a local avionics salesman at Eastern Avionics sold a headset to Marwan Al-Shehhi, authorities said, after which his email address was added to a list kept by the terrorist duo, apparently sharing a single email account.

After being alerted by officials at Eastern Avionics to the existence of the emails, local officials had immediately passed them on to the FBI, where knowledge of their very existence might have disappeared into the black hole where evidence collected by the bureau oftentimes appears to end up . . .

But enterprising reporters had already discovered the local angle before the FBI clampdown, and reported it in print as well as on local network TV affiliates.

The story went unreported nationally. Then recently sources close to the investigation released the contents of four of the emails exclusively to the MadCowMorningNews.

Non-negotiable Demands From Paradise

Atta's email correspondence does not contain any information illuminating the terrorist conspiracy, but is instead of a relatively-mundane political nature.

One note, for example, details the passing of a Muslim figure and asks for prayers.

In another, Atta writes, "I demand the decision-makers in the American University in Cairo withdraw their threats of dismissing a Muslim female student who refused to take off the Niqab . . . and adhere to their claimed 'non-discrimination policy' printed in their catalogue."

A "Niqab" is a face veil, according to Islamic sources, and a 'Niqabi' is "a sister who covers her face and hands when in public or in the presence of any man outside her immediate family."

After verifying the authenticity of the Atta emails with local officials we shared them with one of the local reporters who first broke the story of their existence just after the World Trade Center attack, and whose first report on the discovery of the emails appeared six months ago. Amy Ochier's subsequent report led the local news last night on NBC's Charlotte County affiliate.

Tell Us Again . . . When Did They Get Here?

The discovery of Atta's emails deals another blow to the FBI's increasingly-flimsy chronology of the terrorists sojourn in the US, which has Atta's terrorist cadre first arriving in this country from Hamburg in June of 2000 to attend Huffman Aviation in Venice.

But the evidence now surfacing in Charlotte County strongly indicates that Atta and Al-Shehhi were in Punta Gorda as early as April of 2000, and began their training not in Venice but at a soon-to-be-bankrupt flight school, 30 miles down the road in Punta Gorda, called Professional Aviation, where the school's pupils became a focal point for the FBI's investigation.

At least eight of them were interviewed at least several times each. As at Huffman Aviation, the FBI carted off boxes full of paperwork from the school.

"It looks like some of the terrorists were here first and then went to Venice," stated one Charlotte County official six months ago.

Nothing has changed in the interim.

An unknown number of Arab student pilots were left stranded by Professional Aviation's closure, including a large contingent from Tunisia, said local officials.

When Professional Aviation went belly up, many of the school's students then moved to Rudi Dekker's Huffman Aviation in Venice.

Strangely, Professional Aviation was going bankrupt at exactly the same time Huffman Aviation's Rudi Dekkers was generating bad press in nearby Venice for his inability to pay his rent there on-time.

Terrorist ringleader Mohamed Atta was living under an alias in rural Charlotte County, just south of Venice on Florida's Gulf Coast, before moving up to Venice, according to law enforcement officials who state for the record that their investigation ended when they turned over the emails to the FBI.

The feds don't share any of their information, even with local law enforcement, these sources indicated.

One big question is why the FBI has been as silent on all this as Mullah Omar?

Remember him?

Daniel Hopsicker is the author of "Barry & 'the boys;' The CIA, the Mob & America's Secret History" <<http://www.barryandtheboys.com/>>. He also is the publisher of the Mad Cow Morning News <<http://www.madcowprod.com/>>. See a clip from "Mohamed Atta & the Venice Flying Circus" at <http://www.theconspiracychannel.com>.